585 896 To say that it makes absolutely no difference to him might be too extreme a statement. But it is certainly not very important to him, since the primary purpose of his marriage is to obtain progeny and to follow his natural instinct in an honest fashion. This does not mean that he likes to marry a woman of loose morals; quite the contrary.

171 585 896 What is the linguistic data on the subject of virginity? In an interesting paper entitled "The Principles of Bantu Marriage" (Africa Vol. 2, No. 3 (1929), p. 256), E. Torday says, "Some of the most competent philologists assure us that in most Bantu languages there is no word for 'virgin'; . . . . The Wachagga, who may be an exception, use the word 'unimpaired,' and it is perhaps in the use of similar expressions, not exclusively applied to physical virginity, that we shall find the explanation of the absence of a specific term."

585 896 192 Thus the Lonkundó have a noun: ekíté. It is derived from the root kít (the verb is -kítema), which means "to be firmly attached, to be tenacious" (e.g., lokítí, "tenacity"). Ekítí designates something which is difficult to open, to separate, to break up, especially fruit with a tough, hard, thick rind. It is applied to the litófé, lisónjé, and the lisóngó when it is impossible to break the shell which contains the edible portion even though the fruit is ripe. [79] This term is used in a figurative sense for a woman who resists seduction, who "does not allow herself to be opened." It is not at all specific and in no way the equivalent of our word "virginity," rather it seems to signify "chastity."

Other Nkundó tribes seem to have a specific word, bokotó. I learned this term from natives living between the Ikelemba and the Tshuapa, both east and west of the Juli, as well as from some Basékú Bóngwalanga from the old Lulonga District. The missionaries of the Apostolic Prefecture of Basankusu use it in their publications to mean "virginity, virgin." I was not able to get an exact idea of its precise meaning, but as far as I was able to make out it is much closer to "virgin chastity" than ekítí. In any case it includes no reference to physical virginity. (1)

600

1. We should not be astonished that "primitive" tribes have no word in their language

584 power to settle disputes. They claim their share of the remuneration from the ndonga. According to the saying -- in archaic language -- botɛ̀ wǎ ndonga nd'â dombɛ́, "the power (literally, "the medicine") of the ndonga resides in the judges." Not that the judges themselves have the right or the power to intervene in matrimonial palavers. But they are that many additional witnesses. If the day comes when there is a dispute on the subject of the bride price, especially at the time of a divorce, the ndonga can call on them to help him refresh his memory and thus avoid difficulties. For it can easily happen that after several years the official witness has only a vague and approximate recollection of what was paid. If the judges do not receive anything at the time of payment, they will refuse to give their assistance at the critical moment. It is therefore an intelligent policy to acquiesce to their desires even though strictly speaking they can invoke no real prerogatives.

178 584 622 At the present time the colonial government, having established districts and named chiefs, the latter have had attributed to them the right to officially act as ndonga in matrimonial matters, or at least they have taken advantage of the powers given them and done so. In general [111] they summon the judges of the district at the same time, and the matter is entered after a fashion in the register of settlements. The chief's presence as a witness may have some value, since he can provide additional testimony and writes down the amount of the bride price. But his presence, on the other hand, has the disadvantage of involving him in matters which all in all are none of his business. We are not speaking here of cases in which he or some relatives of his are interested parties in the palaver. If he would be content to be a passive witness and enter the transactions that take place, the situation would be perfect.

192 184 It is probable that etymologically the word ndonga is derived from the verb root long, intransitive longam, "to be in order, arranged," transitive longy, "to arrange, make as it should be." In addition to the word ndonga, which is used west of the Lulaka, we find the word bokílo used among the Bɔ́ngí and the Bɔ́dyɛ́ (as well as the Elíngí), and ntómbi among the Injólɔ́. The latter term could be the same word as its homonym which means "spy" and is derived from the verb

192 tomba, "to spy"; the former may be an extension of the meaning of 184 the word bokólo, "promise." (1)

[572]

1. Note in passing that a ndonga is also necessary for the boseka, or contract of friendship and mutual assistance. (See Chapter I, Part 1, Article III.).

Article III. The Engagement

584 589 1. The payment of the ikulá

The engagement begins with the first bride-price payment, which in former times was an arrow and for that reason is called likulá [556] or ilulá. If the suitor was very rich, he sometimes gave an ingóndá knife or even an empúte. A poorer one would merely give the shaft of an arrow. Nowadays 1 or 2 copper rings are given. But the original name of this payment has been retained.

Arriving at the home of the father of his intended, [112] the suitor, his father (or a substitute for him), the ndonga(s) and often other relatives as well, sit down on one side of the lotínjá (the court in front of a dwelling), after an exchange of the usual courtesies. The girl and the representatives of her family sit down on the opposite side. As in all matters that a Nkundó has to settle, the host begins by inquiring into the reason for the visit. The young man's father answers: "We have come to ask for your daughter for our son." "How do you ask for her?" "We ask for her in marriage." These preliminary negotiations are called simply tíwana nsango, "to ask each other for news."

Then the girl's father asks: "Who will bring the linko (banana) or the bonyáku (partially ripe banana), that is, the gifts?" Through this figurative expression he asks who has been proposed as ndonga. The young man's father replies: so-and-so, and so-and-so. When they have been accepted, the fiancée's father has bananas, smoked fish, and sometimes hens brought in, and the witness passes them over to the future husband's group.

583x months, even years, may elapse. In the past there was no hurry at all. Only if the father of the woman needed the bride price to obtain a wife for himself, for a son, or a cousin, etc., was the period
[178] shortened. Nowadays, however, those who are entitled to the bride price urge the shortening of the interval before the walo payment because of the overexcitation of their desire for riches, on the one hand, and also because it gives the young people a possibility of leaving their tribes and regions and going into the centers to find the means of earning more money, dressing more luxuriously, satisfying their vanity and their desire for freedom, not to mention libertinism or even worse. Nor has the one reason present in the past disappeared -- on the contrary. And as a result of all that, as soon as the interval becomes a little long to the girl's father's taste, he readily brings the situation to the attention of the chiefs established by the administration, who are always ready to deal with matrimonial cases as much for the financial gain involved as for the increase in their prestige resulting from their involvement in this most important realm, in which according to ancestral law they have no right whatsoever to intervene, for the simple reason that this law knows no chiefs or headmen in the European sense.

1. Terminology

589x
● 192 The term walo is used by the Bonkoso, the Bongili, the Bombwanja, and the Ionda; bombuluku, on the other hand, is used by the Wăngată, the Bakăala, the Lifumba, the Injŏlŏ, and the Boŋngi (as well as the Elăngă and the Losanganya). The Bombomba use the term elămbela in imitation of their neighbors, the Ekonda.

This last term may be related to -lămba, [130] "to prepare food." This derivation should be compared with what we have said in Article II about the remuneration of the ndonga. I have been unable to discover the etymology of bombuluku. Let us try our luck with walo.

In accordance with the rules of Nkundŏ etymology, this word could be related to the root -al, or to -alol, which is an intensifier derived from the former. No example of the simple root exists at present, as far as I know. But there are derivative forms: alej and alol, or -aol which results from the elimination of the first "l."

583x
●192 -Alej means "to place in layers," as for example one would place eggs in a basket, bricks in an oven. The noun derived from this word is jwalo, "layer" and, by analogy, "shelf." By extension it is used to signify whatever is placed between layers to protect them, and also the lining of a garment. It is difficult to find a relationship with the word walo here.

-Aol may be used as an intensifier and also to reverse the meaning or a word. The latter use results in a noun ending in a final "o" as in jwalɔ́ of aola bangɛnju, "to pour out the vegetables." Thus it must be excluded.

In its other meanings this verb occurs in combination with several nouns. It occurs first of all with walo when this word is used to signify the beating for small game. (1) In addition it is used to

1. The expression tumba walo is also used.

mean "to collect and gather weeds, chaff, sweepings, ashes." The action is called jwalo.

The most natural conclusion is certainly that the noun under discussion should be placed together with -aol in the meaning given last. The word would then refer to the relatively large amount of valuables deposited. As a matter of fact, the act of gathering chaff, etc., is practically and physically identical with the act of picking up rings, etc. *A difficulty stands in the way of this explanation,* however; [131] the expression is not -aola walo, but eola walo, or eola baŭmbɛ́ not only for this particular payment but also, mutatis mutandis, for the various payments and presents connected with marriage, such as funeral payments and gifts given at the time of death. (1)

1. The verb -eola indicates rather the quantity of objects picked up and is used in many other combinations. A noun njelɔ́ means "a large number of objects" (especially fish).

In any case the term walo has not the slightest etymological connection with the word walɛ́, "spouse," nor with the root -bal, "to marry."

583 a palaver concerning the bride price without giving at least this
431 pledge. He will then fulfill this obligation as quickly as possible, because most mothers-in-law are so eager for this payment that if the son-in-law is too slow in giving them satisfaction, they do everything to break up the marriage. And often they succeed. They will win their case before the tribunal, unless they have been too short of patience.

Article VI. Presents, or Bɛ́ngo

After the bulk of the bride price has been paid to the wife's mother and father, her parents as well as various other members of the family demand various small payments and presents called bɛ́ngo (sing. bɔ́ngo) from the husband. The noun is derived from the verb -bénga which is only used with it. An analogous reciprocal form,
●[192] -béngana means "to touch one another, to collide." Was the original meaning of -bénga "to attract to oneself?" Or are the two verbs totally unconnected etymologically? Whatever the case, these terms are also used to denote the remuneration received by judges for settling a dispute. [145]

There are many varieties of bɛ́ngo; some are used by particular groups and unknown elsewhere. The various relatives claim them without following any predetermined order. But in any case it is necessary to go through the ndonga. *Each relative therefore tells* him what he wishes in a voice loud enough for everyone present to hear; and it is the ndonga who passes the request on to the husband. "Give this or that bɔ́ngo to so-and-so," he will say. Note also that the payment of these bɛ́ngo is not absolutely essential. Often requests are only partially fulfilled; others may be refused with some excuse, "In-law, I cannot satisfy you; I do not possess such an object." Thus the marriage arrangement is neither hindered nor delayed because everybody cannot be satisfied. The principal bɔ́ngo for the father (1) and sometimes that of the mother (2) are exceptions.

Let us go into some of the particulars concerning the various bɛ́ngo thus requested:

1) Ifaka l'akɔnga b'a'eyɔna, "knife and spears for the girl's father." This consists of a knife and five spears (or more, depending

583* For an aunt, a basin, because she had washed the child.
431 For a brother, a pair of shoes or slippers, because the girl had worn his shoes during the courtship, etc., etc. [150]

All these beengo are included in the sum total of the bride price. Should the occasion arise, they must be returned with the rest.

In addition to the beengo asked for and received by the woman's relatives, others are demanded by members of the husband's family. As in the case of the former each person voices his claims according to his desires and without any predetermined order but must always do so through the ndonga. The gifts chiefly consist of furs of the [281] esofe otter, the lifika monkey, bonkono and yenvi felines; a joint of game (money, antelope, etc.), a mat, a pot, a hunting net, a carrying bag (bokumbe), a bead necklace, etc. Nowadays there may [117] also be various items introduced by the Europeans: items of clothing, fabrics, saucepans, dishes, etc. This category of beengo is included in the sum total of the nkomi (see the following article). If the nkomi is given immediately, the parties proceed with this payment. Then the ndonga(s) are remunerated as stated above: each party gives him at least 2 rings.

Finally, the woman's father says to the husband: "In any case, be on your way; we will collect the nkomi and bring it to you." Whereupon the husband leaves; if he prefers to wait for his wife he remains, and returns home when the items of the nkomi have been collected.

Article VII. Nkomi

Nkomi is the name for the objects which the wife's family gives to the husband. The term likomo is also sometimes used. The [192] Inkutu say likoma, the Wangata, Bakutu, Ioanda, and Boongi say likomi. All these words are derived from the same verb -koma, "to wrap up, to make a package," (1) for the nkomi valuables are

1. The Bodwa say lilonga from the verb -longa, which has the same meaning as -koma.

583 × female relative thanks to whom he was able to obtain this wife (see
431 below, Article X). He keeps a small part for himself and, in agree-
425 ment with his wife, uses it according to his needs. When husband and wife are on good terms, he consults her before giving away or selling any of it. And if she wishes to dispose of any of it, she asks his permission. Thus they work the matter out amiably. But legally it all belongs to the husband. Should he want to use it for gifts or for any payment of his own, his wife can make no claim; she will not win her case before the law. But from a practical point of view, it is much wiser to come to an agreement in advance and thus avoid any annoyance
583 × or quarrel.

431 The size of the nkomf depends on the wealth of the woman's
[556] parents. Not only is a large one a point [152] of honor and esteem;
[595] it is also a means of increasing the stability of the marriage and securing harmony. The bigger the nkomf the more obliged the husband is to treat his wife well and see that she is content with him, out of fear of having to return the entire fortune if the marriage should ever be broken.

The nkomf may be very large, even as great or greater than the bride price; in these extreme cases the girl is spoken of as
● [192] lifaya-njoku, for like an elephant (njoku) she goes to live elsewhere (lifaya) because of all the riches she carries with her. The term njokwobwo is also used; literally, it refers to a kind of mushroom which grows in abundance all over the bondif tree. (1)

1. The use of these terms is not specifically confined to the situation described above. They are also applied to any stranger who settles in, or simply passes through, the village, bringing many riches -- to the white men, for example.

558 With reference to this subject an old custom should be men-
583 × tioned. Because of his love for his daughter and a desire for renown,
431 a father might give his son-in-law a quantity of bakonga, in varying amounts but enough to pay for the acquisition of a wife, hence bride-price valuables, so to speak.

583× The expression for being the object of a bride-price payment is kwɛ̀ batímbɛ́, literally, "to make valuables fall." Hence the name ǒkwɛ̀tímbɛ́, "one who is the object of a payment of valuables."

As we have said, it is possible to make all the payments described at the same time. This is done only in the case of remarriage. All the valuables are handed over at the same time, and there is no longer any distinction between the three payments.

Article IX. The bɔ́ndɔngɔ

1. The nature of the bɔ́ndɔngɔ and the relevant terminology

The bɔ́ndɔngɔ is the last portion of the bride price. It consists of the payment of a slave or the equivalent value in currency. Hence the very common term bɔ́ntɔ, which strictly speaking means "man" but is used to mean "slave" ("He is only a man, they say; that is to say, a slave; ndɔ́ta la bɔ́ntɔ, la lɔ́mɔ, "I possess him as a slave"). The word which actually means "slave," bokwɛ́la, or bɔ́ntámbɔ among the Elíngɛ and the Bodyɛ, (1) is never used in relation to the bride price.

1. Elsewhere the terms bɔ́tɔmbɔ or bɔ́mbɔ are also used.

The Ekonda, however, do use the term ílɔ́ngɛ́, which *is a synonym of* bokwɛ́la and means "slave" in the strict sense of the word. The neighboring Nkundó tribes also use it, probably as a result of their influence. The Bombwanja, the Bongili, the Benkuso, and the Bombomba likewise do so. (2)

[541]

2. The Batswɛ́ never make this payment.

[542] The noun bɔ́ndɔngɔ (lɔ́ndɔngɔ́ among the various Elíngɛ groups) is derived from nɔ́ng, "to pay this part of the bride price." Thus a man will say to his son-in-law, ɔ́nɔ́ lɔ́ngɔ́ lɔ́n'ɛ́kɔ́nɔ́, yɛ́kɛ́tɛ́ yɔ́ndɔngɔ́, "You have already paid the ɔ́nɔ́ for my daughter; now come [154] and pay the bɔ́ndɔngɔ." The definition given by Bunkin (Dictionary of the Lomongo Language, p. 67: "bɔ́ndɔngɔ: the passing over of a

57 daughter or ward in marriage without reference to her wishes, money paid for a slave wife," and p. 314, ebuya: the same) therefore does not correspond to the sense in which these terms are used by the Nkundó tribes under discussion.

Another term for this payment is tsinola lonto (lɛrɔ́ᵑ). I know of no other use of the verb tsinola.

An expression which brings out the idea of its being a last payment is kumbola lonto (lɔnɔ́ᵑ). The verb kumbola means to strike the last blow in felling a tree. (1)

1. Note that kumbola also means "to take in marriage."

Formerly, the payment of a real slave, that is, of a human being, was absolutely obligatory. Nowadays, since slavery has been abolished, the worth of a slave in bekonga has been substituted: it consists of 25 rings, or of 15 to 20 if they are especially beautiful. (2)

2. In the past, the price of a slave was from 10 to 15 rings.

To distinguish between these forms of the lonkonga, the Nkundó say lɔnɔ́ ɔ́w'ɔ́wɛ́ (lɔnɔ́ᵑ ɔ́wɛ́), "a slave with hair," therefore a human being, or lɔnɔ́ ɔ́w'ɔ́kɔ́ngɔ́ (lɔnɔ́ᵑ ɔ́kɔ́ngɔ́), "slave in copper rings."

Bɛ́ɛ́wɛ́, instead of slave, could be given as lonkonga. They were not reduced to slavery, however, but remained in the same position as before, except that they changed masters.

Sometimes a master who wanted to be rid of an incorrigible Bɛ́ɛ́wɛ́ gave him away as a real slave in a lonkonga: in that case it was as if a slave in the strict sense of the word had been given.

In other instances the master acted with the more or less explicit consent of the Bɛ́ɛ́wɛ́. Those who were thus handed over as a bride-price payment were usually women. (1) Since in matrimonial matters of the Bɛ́ɛ́wɛ́, the Bɛ́ɛ́wɛ́ master fulfills the role of "Father," he is entitled to the girls' bride price and has the duty of

(37) discussed in the next article). The Bombwanja, the Ionda, and the Inkutu call it lɔ́ngɔlɔ, "(any) act performed in hiding" (from the verb ɔngɔla). The Ionda also use [211] the term ekundú (from the verb kunda, "to bury), which refers to "something that is buried or hidden under a heap."

Nowadays there is a tendency to apply the term lisúmbú, without any qualification, to adultery of this sort, at least if it is not limited to a single act. The woman and her lover are both called losúmbú (pl. besúmbú).

2) If only an isolated act takes place, it is called yɔ́tsí (from the verb ɔta, "to call"). But this term may also be applied to unmarried persons. Strictly speaking, it denotes a single union and not continuous relations. Certain tribes (the Inkutu, the Elinga) also have the word elongo (for instance in the expression nyongɛ́ elongo, "indemnity for a single instance").

3) The term lonkɔ́ka (lombaká among the Bombwanja) designates adultery between persons belonging to a single exogamous entity and, by extension, between persons belonging to different families but comprising a single settlement.

As the word itself indicates, the relations involved take place between "cousins" in the broadest sense of the term.

(37) The natives gave me an account of the etymology of the
(38) terms lɔngɔ́mbɔ and lonkɔ́ka, which it may be useful to repeat here. They are believed to have been invented by fickle wives and their lovers in order to hide their illicit love affairs. Even of old there were relations between the Nkundó and the Ngombe. A Ngombe who appeared in a Nkundó village was the object of the curiosity of all the young people. A man going to his paramour (or vice versa) or coming back at a very late hour could reply, if suspicions were aroused, that he had been to see the Ngombe. The same trick could be used in a case of lonkɔ́ka. I am passing on this explanation for whatever it's worth -- (for lonkɔ́ka, for instance, the etymology I cited at the beginning seems a good deal more natural). [212] It may be of interest at some time to have it noted and preserved in writing.

certainly happen that a husband who was too jealous or impetuous would wound, kill, or sell his rival. But this was an exception and was always condemned since it was absolutely lacking in chivalry. In any case there can never be any question of demanding an indemnity; such an act would be absolutely shameful.

The culprit is notified of the demand for an indemnity by the ndonga, who in difficult cases is accompanied by various notables. If the husband foresees strong opposition on the debtor's part, he gives the ndonga a special present of a bunch of bananas and two fish (or a hen) "so that he would not be forced to eat the rival's food."

A persistent and categorical refusal to pay the indemnity is unusual. For it can have serious consequences: the taking in custody followed by enslavement because of debts, or [the taking of] compensation in the person of his wife or of a relative, or the retention [by her relatives] of a relative of the creditor who is married into the debtor's clan (ikikelo). Since these practices of taking hostages and of bodily constraint have been abolished, there remains the intervention of the courts, seconded by the police.

What is the Nkundó idea of this payment which we have called an indemnity in order to facilitate its description? The question is difficult to answer. Here are the linguistic facts which may provide elements of the solution:

The payment for adultery is called nyongo, and the word is used together with the verb ka, "to give." The expression is equivalent to the verb lingala fifta (from which the noun bofito is derived). It signifies "payment" in the broadest sense and thus also covers our words "pay," "salary," "remuneration." In addition to its application in the case of adultery, it is also used in many other situations, such as remuneration for work, payment for a service, etc. Nyongo does not mean "compensation," which is called lowéla, nor "a payment making amends [322] and apologizing for an offense," which is bofondo, nor "indemnification" (mbélaka). What the expression has in common with the last term is the concept of a

payment rightly owed, and in the absence of an adequate translation, "indemnity" is still the least inaccurate. (1)

1. The words used for "reward" are bokondo, which is a reward for an unusual service, like the capture of a leopard or another "royal" animal (nyama ɛ'ekolo, such as a python, an eagle, etc.) or a beautiful dance, and mbuneji, which is a reward for small services.

One point remains to be noted. The two forms of punishment, violence and indemnity, may not be combined, and this principle is applied in all situations (2). Should this prohibition be

2. For example, see also Chapter VIII, Article III, 1.

construed as an implicit condemnation of violent measures? Or have we here the use of a system of settlement? It is difficult to settle this question, and actually the two explanations overlap at least in part.

It is not without interest to note that, in order to justify sanctions against the accomplice, the Nkundó invoke his frequently dominant role in adultery. Actually they reason that a woman is weak by nature; her emotions predominate, she is easily led and resists enticement only with difficulty. A man on the other hand is more reasonable, better able to control himself. Sanctions enacted and applied against the wife alone would not only leave out the punishment of one of the two culprits,but they would also be inadequate for the preservation of social order, since the woman remains exposed to succumbing out of weakness in spite of the penalties. The severity of Nkundó law with regard to the corporal punishment of the wife, which exists in spite of these considerations, are explained in terms of the woman's sensitive nature and of the power her husband has over her which he lacks in relation to her accomplice.

that the becomes accustomed to her husband's relations with various other women. Consequently, the reaction of the women in general [321] against adultery is much weaker than that of the men. Moreover, because of this same system, a woman is much more exposed to weakness, and stronger sanctions are therefore necessary to insure her fidelity.

Finally, there is one last reason for considering a woman's misconduct as more serious. It is the danger of conception through adultery, with all the attendant consequences: risks for the pregnant woman, forced continence for the husband, etc. (1)

1. See no. 6 below as well as Chapter I, Part 2, Article IV, 3, and Chapter X, Article II, 2.

From the description of sanctions it is apparent that in spite of the woman's inferior position, Nkundó law does not leave husbands the full and complete freedom which, according to certain writers, they are accorded among other peoples. Even if the means of repression available to the wife do not incontestably prove that the husband has an obligation of conjugal fidelity -- and the wife's legal status explains a great deal -- the fact remains that the nkonga as well as public opinion approve of even her violent reaction, proving that she is right and the husband wrong.

5. Public opinion

Public opinion is fairly lenient in relation to isolated instances (yɛ̂tsi, elongo). It clearly recognizes the error involved in infringing on the conjugal rights of another, but the error is attributed to human weakness. In the case of habit the situation is different; it is criticized frequently and severely. Habitual sinners are called **ɛ̂fɛ̂fɔkɔ** (from the verb **fɔfɔka**, literally "to flutter" and figuratively "to flirt"), **ɛkɔ̂ngɛ** or **ɛkɔ̂ngɛkɔ** (from the verb **kɔ̂ngɛ**) or **ɛkɔfɔkɔ** (from **kɔfɔa**) "to flutter, to be flighty and fickle." These epithets are applied primarily to women, who are more subject to this failing than men.

595^A. Thus a favorite is in every way the object of her husband's
(97) preference. He divides with her all presents he receives, while
the other wives are not included in this expression of generosity.
(85) But in the matter of sexual relations, apart from his trips, he has
obligations to all of them. The most he can do is to add one night
to the usual number (see below).

The co-wives adapt fairly well to this preferential system.
Nevertheless, there is a good deal of backbiting on account of it.
It may also happen that one or another of the wives is jealous to
(96) the point of being unable to bear it. [367] The signs of her rancor
multiply, and a divorce results in the end.

The nkfndlf does not have to go into mourning for anyone
(76) other than her husband. Even then she does not remove her clothing.
But she does not have to abide by mourning regulations either for
her parents or her own children.

Like the other wives, the favorite is passed on through inheri-
(87) tance. But she cannot be taken as a lendlf by anyone except an
older brother of the deceased.

595^B. Nkfndlf is the specific term by which a favorite is designated.
• 192. Its etymology is unknown to me. The word is used everywhere,
although the Inyelf often say lokfla (whose etymology is equally ob-
scure). Another less common (older?) term known to the Bonkoso,
Bongili, Wengere, and Bakdala is longlf or longlf (1). In addition

1. The Ekonda call the favorite lokfla.
The Elanga of Lowangonya say lolf, a
name borne by certain women among the
Nkundf between Jwalf and Bolaka. Might
this also be an old name?

to the term lkondaka, already cited, there is also the word elfifdf,
a generic term meaning "preference, predilection" or, when applied
to a child or a slave, "an object one does not want to dispose of."
The favorite is also called ikfkfkand, "untouchable," because other
men may not have relations with her.

Qualifying expressions are sometimes added to the same nkûndé: nkî bokɔ́ngɔ, referring to the bokɔ́ngɔ on which the favorite is seated during the ceremony in which her position is established, and nkî lɔ́mbɔ, "true." The two terms are used as opposed to a nkûndé nkî wɛ́lɔ́, whose position is established without any special ceremony, in imitation of a true, officially recognized favorite.

The expression for "making a nkûndé" is dia nkûndé, "to make a nkûndé come out," because she is proclaimed as such before the public gathering. Nowadays one often hears the expression tɔ́na nkûndé, a term which is very probably transformed from the bolîmbé. (See the next article.) [346]

Article III. The bolîmbé

The polygamist who by birth or influence is recognized as the eyɛ́mbɔ́ mɔ́tɔ́ pawa of a group of clans and who, to use the Nkundé term, is ɔ́kɔ́ ɔ́ ɔ́tɛ́ (1) has the exclusive right to make one of his wives

1. Nowadays one would call him the chief. But actually he was not a chief; he was simply the most respected and influential member of the oligarchy of clan patriarchs. This oligarchy constituted the political administration of the Nkundé, and from time to time an eminent personality gained recognition within it.

a bolîmbé. Therefore, doing so was not, as with a favorite, a matter of wealth and preference, but rather a mark of influence and authority.

In relation to this subject, here is a historical incident showing how an attack on this law resulted in a mysterious punishment, interpreted by the natives as an intervention from beyond the grave for the protection of the ancestral order. The events occurred at Bɛ́ɛ́mbɛ́ (Bombwanje), in the Bongîlî family. Bɔ́ɔ́kɔ́ w'Ɔ́ɔ́ngɔ́ had married Eyeko of Bolôkɔ́ and by her had his eldest son

[147] is the one who brings her to her husband and is, at the same time, ndonga for the payment of the bride price, which is made as for any woman. The expression is: X ɔ́ɔ́mɛ́la bokɔ́tɔ́ Y ebíla, "X repeats her sister Y ebíla."

In case of the elder's absence or upon her death, the ebíla replaces her or inherits all her rights in the household.

The elder relative cares a great deal about having her ebíla, because as a result she rises in her husband's estimation and she herself has an assistant in her work and a confidante in her troubles. The ebíla herself has the advantage of not being alone or abandoned at the beginning of her marriage, but of being able to count on a protector and guide, and if her elder occupies a privileged rank in the harem, she has the certainty of sharing her prerogatives and the likelihood of one day succeeding her. [253]

The term ebíla is used by the Nkundó between the Jwalí and the Bolóko, and by the Ionda. The Bombwanja designate such a woman by the name loambwɛ́ or loambyɛ́. The Bokɔ́ŋɔ́ and the Isɔ́fɔ́ɔ́ also call her loambyɛ́. (1)

[94] 1. The Bonyanga say mbambwɛ́ or loambwɛ́. Out of respect they sometimes call her bongílí and the woman who has brought her nyangílí. (See also Chapter II, Article X, and Chapter VI, Article VI.) The Ekonda call her lombíla or lombísa (mbísa, "last").

[95] Ebíla may be related to the root bí, from which is derived the verb bíngana, "to be united." Loambwɛ́ or loambyɛ́ are derived from lamb, which means: 1) "to be united" and 2) "to follow" (in order, in rank).

These names indicate the nature of this marriage that does not arise from direct relations between husband and wife but is established through the medium of another preceding marriage. Or to express the situation in Lonkundó: ɛ́fa lílá jɔ́ɔ́lí mɔ́ngɛ́, ɛ́ɛmɛna l'ɔ́mbo mɔ́mɔ́ɔ́lɛ́, "this is not a marriage which comes

the other." (1)
[672]

1. Except, of course, if the new husband puts himself in the wrong by taking the woman home with him before the divorce is completed (see above).

The term for making restitution of the bride price is [672] ɓndoja (bɛ́ɔmbá, ɛ́ngí, etc.); [398] its intransitive form is ɓndola ("to recover the cost of the bride price," and the passive is ɓnjwa, "to be restituted." The noun is njóndó or wɔ́ndó ("restitution," "reimbursement").

2. Methods of making restitution

The woman's father can pay back the bride price in two ways:

1) By means of valuables received from the new husband. In this case the more the latter hastens his payment, the sooner the new union will be made final.

2) By means of his own wealth, lontumd or lɔkakata (ekakata), an intensitive derived from likata, "hand." This method of payment settles the matter more quickly and avoids complaints lodged by the former husband. Sometimes restitution is made in this manner to show wealth and generosity.

In such a case the father acts spontaneously of his own free will. But can he be required to thus make restitution with his own wealth?

Yes. If the bride price is still in the hands of the woman's family, it must be returned immediately. This rule is easily understood, for under these circumstances no practical difficulty stands in the way of reimbursement.

Although as a rule the bride-price valuables will already have been spent for the acquisition of another wife (the okita), this is not always the case. For example, only a very short time may have elapsed between the conclusion of the marriage and the divorce. But such a case was and is rare. Instances where the bride price was still in the family's possession were even rarer in the past, for people did not want bride-price wealth to remain

§57 Note, finally, that the confession is restricted to married
783 women. It is never expected of a young unmarried mother. There-
§53 fore it would seem to be a practice connected with marriage (a social institution) and not with childbirth (a physiological phenomenon).

This confession is called esato or lotato, from the verb [192] -sata, "to confess," (for which the generic term, songa, "to say," is sometimes substituted).

I was unable to find any reason for this practice other than that of avoiding the death of the child. It is evident, however, that this explanation does not exhaust the question, although it is entirely possible that the original and deeper meaning has been lost without leaving any trace in the minds of the present generation. [496]

§53 3) During the entire duration of nursing, the mother must
§33 not be separated from her child. For the usual circumstances of daily life, this rule is broadly interpreted; but during sexual relations it is strict, and no exceptions or excuses are permitted. Negligence under these circumstances would inevitably bring about the death of the child by ndoka as soon as the mother took it back. This rule holds for legitimate relations as much as for illicit ones. Therefore the mother must always keep her child at her breast.

§53 4) If at some point during nursing, the milk no longer flows
[757] in sufficient quantity, the mother is given a potion consisting of
[278] the extract of the bark of the bolongf tree (which has a fruit containing a very sweet milky sap). Then she eats vegetables called londif. (1)

> 1. The leaves of this plant are also ordinarily eaten as vegetables, but they are consumed especially by those who possess the modern magical practice known as loyalii.

[262] 5) An accident to which the Nkundó attach great importance is the rejection or vomiting of milk into the mouth of an adult, even if the person affected is the infant's mother. Such a person